

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend claims 1 to 20 as set forth hereinafter, please cancel claim 2.

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) variant, comprising an amino acid sequence, wherein said sequence is the amino acid sequence of the native vascular endothelial growth factor in which at least one amino acid at positions 109 to 112 of the native vascular endothelial growth factor is replaced by another amino acid or is deleted, wherein said at least one amino acid in the sequence of the native vascular endothelial growth factor at positions 109 to 112 is replaced by proline.
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Currently Amended) The VEGF variant according to claim 2 1, wherein at least one further amino acid at one of the positions 109 to 112 is replaced or is deleted.
4. (Previously Presented) The VEGF variant according to claim 1, wherein an alanine at position 111 of the native vascular endothelial growth factor is replaced by proline.

5. (Previously Presented) The VEGF variant according to claim 4, wherein an arginine at position 110 of the native vascular endothelial growth factor is replaced by another amino acid.
6. (Previously Presented) The VEGF variant according to claim 1, wherein an arginine at position 110 of the native vascular endothelial growth factor is replaced by proline.
7. (Previously Presented) The VEGF variant according to claim 6, wherein an alanine at position 111 of the native vascular endothelial growth factor is replaced by another amino acid.
8. (Canceled)
9. (Previously Presented) The VEGF variant according to claim 1, wherein the VEGF variant is in the form of any of the splice variants VEGF₁₂₁, VEGF₁₄₅, VEGF₁₆₅, VEGF₁₈₃, VEGF₁₈₉ or VEGF₂₀₆.
10. (Previously Presented) The VEGF₁₆₅ variant according to claim 9, wherein the VEGF₁₆₅ variant has one of the amino acid sequences

Seq. ID No. 1:

Ala Pro Met Ala Glu Gly Gly Gly Gln Asn His His Glu Val Val
 Lys Phe Met Asp Val Tyr Gln Arg Ser Tyr Cys His Pro Ile Glu
 Thr Leu Val Asp Ile Phe Gln Glu Tyr Pro Asp Glu Ile Glu Tyr
 Ile Phe Lys Pro Ser Cys Val Pro Leu Met Arg Cys Gly Gly Cys
 Cys Asn Asp Glu Gly Leu Glu Cys Val Pro Thr Glu Glu Ser Asn
 Ile Thr Met Gln Ile Met Arg Ile Lys Pro His Gln Gly Gln His
 Ile Gly Glu Met Ser Phe Leu Gln His Asn Lys Cys Glu Cys Arg
 Pro Lys Lys Asp Arg **Pro** Arg Gln Glu Asn Pro Cys Gly Pro Cys
 Ser Glu Arg Arg Lys His Leu Phe Val Gln Asp Pro Gln Thr Cys
 Lys Cys Ser Cys Lys Asn Thr Asp Ser Arg Cys Lys Ala Arg Gln
 Leu Glu Leu Asn Glu Arg Thr Cys Arg Cys Asp Lys Pro Arg Arg

or Seq. ID No. 2:

Ala Pro Met Ala Glu Gly Gly Gly Gln Asn His His Glu Val Val
 Lys Phe Met Asp Val Tyr Gln Arg Ser Tyr Cys His Pro Ile Glu
 Thr Leu Val Asp Ile Phe Gln Glu Tyr Pro Asp Glu Ile Glu Tyr
 Ile Phe Lys Pro Ser Cys Val Pro Leu Met Arg Cys Gly Gly Cys
 Cys Asn Asp Glu Gly Leu Glu Cys Val Pro Thr Glu Glu Ser Asn
 Ile Thr Met Gln Ile Met Arg Ile Lys Pro His Gln Gly Gln His
 Ile Gly Glu Met Ser Phe Leu Gln His Asn Lys Cys Glu Cys Arg
 Pro Lys Lys Asp **Lys Pro** Arg Gln Glu Asn Pro Cys Gly Pro Cys
 Ser Glu Arg Arg Lys His Leu Phe Val Gln Asp Pro Gln Thr Cys
 Lys Cys Ser Cys Lys Asn Thr Asp Ser Arg Cys Lys Ala Arg Gln
 Leu Glu Leu Asn Glu Arg Thr Cys Arg Cys Asp Lys Pro Arg Arg .

11. (Previously Presented) The VEGF variant according to claim 1, wherein the amino acid chain is modified or derivatized and/or comprises mutations, insertions and/or deletions and/or has a signal sequence.

12. (Currently Amended) The VEGF variant according to claim 11, wherein the signal sequence is connected N-terminally to the amino acid chain of the VEGF variant and has the sequence of Seq. ID No. 3:

Met Asn Phe Leu Leu Ser Trp ~~Ser~~ Val His Trp Ser Leu Ala Leu
Leu Leu Tyr Leu His His Ala Lys Trp Ser Gln Ala.

13. (Previously Presented) A nucleic acid encoding the VEGF variant of claim 1.
14. (Previously Presented) Vectors comprising nucleic acids according to claim 13 for expression of said VEGF variant.
15. (Previously Presented) A medicament comprising VEGF variants according to claim 1.
16. (Canceled)
17. (Withdrawn) A method for treating chronic wounds comprising administering to a patient in need thereof an effective amount of the VEGF variant of claim 1.
18. (Withdrawn) A method for treating a condition induced by a vascular lesion comprising administering to a patient in need thereof an effective amount of the VEGF variant of claim 1, wherein said condition is chronic venous insufficiency (CVI), primary/secondary lymphoedema, arterial occlusive disease, a metabolic disorder, a chronic inflammatory disorder, a perforating dermatosis, a haematological primary disorder, sickle-cell anaemia and polycythemia vera, or a tumor.

19. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 18, wherein said metabolic disorder is diabetes mellitus, gout or decubitus ulcer, said chronic inflammatory disorder is pyoderma gangrenosum or vasculitis, said perforating dermatosis is diabetic necrobiosis lipoidica or granuloma annulare, said haematological primary disorder is a coagulation defect and said tumor is a primary cutaneous tumor or an ulcerative metastasis.
20. (Withdrawn) A method for inhibiting plasmin, inducing neoangiogenesis, and/or inhibiting matrix degradation comprising administering to a patient in need thereof an effective amount of the VEGF variant of claim 1.